



TCNJ THE COLLEGE OF
NEW JERSEY

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES



STAFF RECRUITING AND HIRING GUIDE

For Hiring Managers and Search Committees



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Overview

The Staff Recruiting and Hiring Guide details the various steps involved in The College of New Jersey's hiring process for professional staff positions and serves as a reference tool for search committees to use in an effort to make the hiring process fair, equitable and consistent. This guide also provides resources to assist you with the search including, but not limited to, sample interview questions. The department of Human Resources encourages those who are charged with participating in and making the hiring decision to use this guide as a best practice document.

The College of New Jersey believes that diversity in its many forms is essential to the educational experience and therefore strives to be an institution where diversity and inclusion are reflected in the culture, climate, and daily operations of the college. Therefore, a goal in the hiring process is to attract diverse applicant pools of individuals who share our commitment to, and values of, diversity and inclusion.

It is our hope that these practices will come to be incorporated into all standard professional staff searches conducted at The College of New Jersey.



Before the Search

A Vacancy is Identified

Contact the [Office of Human Resources talent acquisition team](#) to discuss the process for new and changed positions. A dedicated recruiter will provide consultation throughout the entire hiring process.

Creating the Position Description

The hiring manager will be responsible for creating the [job description](#). An evaluation of the business needs determines if the current job description needs to be updated. Ensuring the description accurately defines the position requirements is an essential part of the search process. The position description should accurately describe the work to be performed and the necessary and desired qualifications of the successful candidate. The description will aid in the development of the interviewing criteria, the preparation of questions for the interview, and the candidate selection process.

Initiating a Requisition to Fill the Vacancy

The hiring manager creates a requisition in Taleo using the [staff requisition instructions](#). All requisitions must be submitted for approval.

The approval path is as follows:

- o Division Vice President
- o Director of Talent Acquisition and Compensation
- o Director of Budget and Fiscal Planning

Forming the Search Committee

The hiring manager:

- ✓ Invites a diverse group of stakeholders to form the search committee including, where possible, women, underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, and members of other underrepresented groups
- ✓ Ensures that the committee chair is committed to diversity
- ✓ Identifies specific tasks to be completed, establishes a meeting schedule, and reviews expectations of committee members

The following factors are important considerations in the selection of a search committee.

Search Committee Responsibilities

The search committee's responsibility is to identify a slate of top candidates for the vacancy. In her/his/their charge to the committee, the hiring manager launching the search should emphasize that this



responsibility includes advancing the goal of identifying outstanding candidates who are women, underrepresented minorities, and members of other underrepresented groups.

In accordance with the law and or contractual agreements, there may be situations in which The Office of Human Resources will require certain qualified candidates who are not listed in the applicant tracking system (Taleo) to be extended a bona fide interview. Human Resources will provide the Search Committee Chair with a copy of the qualified candidate's resume and cover letter. While the candidate must be interviewed, this does not mean that the candidate must be selected. They should be afforded equal consideration to the other candidates interviewed.

Importance of a Diverse Search Committee

It is important to include women, underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, and members of other underrepresented groups on the search committee, wherever possible, because a diverse committee is more likely to generate a strong applicant pool.

When considering women and underrepresented minority staff members to serve on search committees, keep in mind that they may face a greater number of committee appointments than their colleagues. If there are few women and underrepresented minority staff members in a particular business unit, consider inviting women and underrepresented minority staff from other administrative units to serve on the search committee.

Preparing for the Recruitment Effort with a Diversity & Inclusion Mindset

All search committee members are expected to view [Diversity Recruitment and Hiring Learning Content](#) after the first search committee convenes, but before the recruitment steps begin.

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

Members of the search committee should have no conflicts of interest. Before the search, the search committee should have a plan for how to deal with any conflicts of interest that arise during the search process.

Attentiveness to the Power Dynamic of the Search Committee

The professional, mentoring, or personal relationships within the search committee will affect the power dynamics of the group. To help ensure that recommendations are a result of fair deliberations, and that all individuals have an equal opportunity to voice their thoughts, be mindful of how power dynamics may affect the group while assembling the committee. Although not all power dynamics can be avoided, adhering to rules on equal participation and voting in the search committee can help ensure equitable participation in decision making.

Avoiding Common Biases in the Search Process

Consider incorporating the following interventions to minimize bias and ensure an equitable search:



Document the entire search process: Creating a record of search committee discussions, advertisements, nominations, recruiting efforts, interviews with candidates, interviews with references, and rationale for selecting or refusing candidates will allow committee members to review their process for evidence of bias, and to make corrections as needed.

Establish evaluation criteria: Deciding in advance of reviewing applications which criteria will be used, and how they will be weighted, will help evaluators avoid biases:

- Assuming that individuals from prestigious institutions or organizations are the best candidates without viewing all applications more closely and/or considering the needs of the business unit
- Holding different candidates to different standards based upon stereotypes
- Using a minor reason to disqualify a candidate without properly considering all other criteria
- Designating some candidates as more promising than others without fully considering strengths and developmental opportunities of all applicants
- Having strong group members, particularly those who have more TCNJ seniority, reach and express consensus without sufficient discussion, which may make it difficult for others to challenge those conclusions

Dispelling Myths about Diversity Recruitment

It is vital to the recruitment and hiring process that myths are dispelled regarding diversity hiring.

Assumption: Factoring in diversity considerations will distract from the goal of finding an exceptional candidate.

Reality: A focus on diversity enhances the likelihood of finding an outstanding candidate. A diverse candidate pool comprised of women, underrepresented minorities, and other underrepresented groups ensures that applicants with varied experiences are considered. Avoiding bias in the evaluation process promotes a fair assessment of all candidates and leads to the selection of a highly qualified individual for the position.

A Note on Confidentiality

The search committee should establish clear guidelines at the outset of the search process for keeping discussions, personal or background information on a candidate, and all candidate's names in confidence. Committee members should understand that it is inappropriate to engage in any off-the-record reference checks of candidates. Establishing such guidelines is an essential part of any search. All committee members must complete the [Commitment Form for Search Committee Members](#) prior to the beginning of the search.

Placement of Advertisements

The hiring manager will submit the job advertisement after which point the search committee chair will submit the job advertisement to the Office of Human Resources. Postings are generally visible for a



minimum of 30 days and typically expire after the 30 day period. If necessary, the advertisement can be extended.

The Office of Human Resources will pay up to \$1,400 for the cost of advertisements on additional sites besides those that are indicated below. Costs that exceed \$1,400 must be paid by the hiring department or School. All externally posted vacancies will be posted on these sites:

- TCNJ Careers Website
- State of New Jersey Civil Service Commission
- The Chronicle of Higher Education
- Higher Ed Jobs
- Indeed
- Inside Higher Ed
- Insight Into Diversity
- LinkedIn

Additional posting sites, in particular those with a targeted audience of women and diverse candidates, may be found on [Appendix 2](#).

Recruitment Strategies

Active recruiting entails soliciting applications from potential candidates by making information about the available position widely known, both through advertising and seeking out qualified individuals through professional networks. It involves finding sources of qualified candidates rather than assuming that all potential candidates will find and apply to the vacancy. To enrich the applicant pool, consider employing a multitude of strategies:

- *Staff Associations:* Staff members can reach out to qualified candidates through their membership with relevant groups or organizations
- *Personal outreach:* Candidates will often not apply to positions and will need to be invited to apply by a member of the search committee.
- *Individuals who decline nominations:* These individuals may be able to refer other outstanding candidates for the position.

It is important to advertise and raise awareness of opportunities through channels that will reach women, underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, and members of other underrepresented groups. There are a variety of ways to do so:

- *Target publications:* Advertisements can be posted in publications that specifically target women and underrepresented groups.
- *Professional associations:* Mailing lists for women and underrepresented minorities within these groups can be a way of disseminating information of the position.
- *Professional conferences:* Staff members can connect with women and underrepresented minority candidates attending conferences who may be good candidates for an available position.



Communicating with Applicants

Courteous communication includes promptly responding to all correspondence and keeping applicants apprised of the recruiting process and its timeline. Convey appreciation of candidates' interest in the position and consideration of their efforts by acknowledging receipt of applications, informing applicants once they are no longer being considered for the position (or of next steps in the process if consideration is continuing), and providing details of interviews and campus visits in a timely manner.

Evaluating Applicants

When evaluating applicants it is important to make sure that the process is fair. It may be necessary to correct for unconscious biases by instituting certain protocols around reviewing applications.

- *Establish evaluation criteria:* The dimensions for judging applicants, as well as their relative importance, should be determined prior to reviewing applications. Choose criteria that can help predict the future success of the applicant.
- *Adhere to evaluation criteria:* When assessing applications, it is important to adhere to evaluation criteria. Using a standard evaluation form will help committees to rate criteria consistently across a pool of candidates.
- *Look for strengths:* In the initial assessment of applicants, it will be helpful to search for reasons to continue considering individuals for the position. Such an approach will ensure that strengths are not overlooked and that all promising candidates are included.
- *Rely on evidence:* When determining whether or not a candidate meets certain criteria, refer to materials in the candidate's application. Ensure that similar information is collected on all applicants. For example, if one candidate receives an unsolicited reference from a colleague, then the search committee should reach out to colleagues of other candidates to obtain references.
- *Spend adequate time reviewing each application:* Allow enough time to review each application to ensure that each candidate receives a thorough assessment.
- *Secure reviews by more than one search committee member:* Each application should be assessed by more than one search committee member to ensure a fair evaluation.
- *Avoid subjecting different candidates to different expectations:* Women and underrepresented minorities may tend to be held to higher expectations regarding their depth and breadth of experience. An awareness of this potential bias will allow these candidates to receive proper consideration.
- *Avoid elitism:* Be careful of rating a candidate highly solely because of the reputation of their current employer.
- *Avoid premature ranking:* Ensure that each application has been fully considered with respect to the different criteria that were agreed upon prior to expressing preferences for particular candidates.
- *Create multiple ranking lists of candidates:* Ranking candidates on each criterion and then choosing individuals who placed highly in all categories will allow for a fair construction of the candidate shortlist.



Candidate Review

Following the initial candidate review where application materials are evaluated by the committee, the search committee will create an intermediate list of candidates for further consideration. Intermediate candidates will be invited to interview for the vacancy this could be in the form of a phone screen, remote interview or in-person. If the pool of intermediate candidates lacks women and/or underrepresented minorities, the search committee may be tasked with enlisting more aggressive recruitment efforts before moving to the next phase in the search.

- The Director of Equal Opportunity Programs will review the candidate list to confirm that the selection and evaluation processes were fair and equitable. If the pool of candidates does not reflect a diverse pool, the Director of Equal Opportunity Programs will determine whether recruitment and outreach efforts were sufficiently broad. If not, the search may be extended to expand recruitment efforts.
- The applicants who are to be interviewed can be placed in “Interviewing” status in the applicant tracking system, Taleo, by the search committee Chair.

Interview Questions

Prior to conducting interviews, the search committee must submit the questions to their designated recruiter for approval. In addition to formal interviews with the search committee, there may be an assessment of the candidate’s knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as discussions with peers, and/or informal interviews with additional stakeholders.

Prepare Interviewers to Conduct the Interview

- Provide interviewers with the candidate’s interviewing schedule.
- Provide a list of interview questions to be asked of each candidate. By posing the same questions to each candidate, each member of your committee will be able to collect comparable information from all candidates.
- If a panel interview will be conducted (a group of interviewers will speak with the candidate together), decide beforehand how the questions will be divided among interviewers.
- Provide interviewers with guidelines about what questions are not acceptable to ask (see appendix).

Phone Screens and Remote Interviews

Phone screens and remote interviews may be conducted, typically, using Zoom or another webinar platform. These types of interviews are a precursor to identifying the finalist candidates who will be invited to campus to meet the search committee and/or other stakeholders. These interviews are a formal step in the interview process whereby the search committee enlists interviewing techniques and processes



that have been described in this guide. At the end of this intermediate step, finalists for the open position will be identified.

It is important to treat all modes of interviews in the same manner. For example, if a Zoom interview is recorded for one candidate the remaining qualified candidate interviews must be recorded.

On Campus Interviews

Once the candidate list of finalists is determined, the search committee will invite candidates to TCNJ for an on campus interview. These visits are opportunities for candidates and department staff members to learn about each other as potential colleagues.

Accessibility

It is important that all on campus interviews be held in accessible locations. It will not always be clear if a candidate has impaired mobility prior to arrival on campus. You may not legally ask a candidate to reveal if they have a disability. However, before the visit you should ask the candidate if they will need any special accommodations for their interview. Accommodations may be related to a person's physical disability or to their special dietary needs.

Coordination of the Campus Visit

Provide a warm welcome to all candidates. Make sure department staff know of a candidate's arrival and are available to welcome them. A search committee member or business unit staff member can escort the candidate to different events and interviews during the visit.

- Have the candidate meet with department staff members, particularly those they may be interested in collaborating with, and persons of similar background and interests.
- Ensure these interactions are positive and friendly, and that all who meet with candidates have information about their professional background.
- Ensure women and underrepresented minority staff members meet with all candidates, not just women and underrepresented minority candidates.
- End the campus visit on a positive note and inform the candidate of a general timeline for the next steps in the hiring process.

The Interview Schedule

The agenda for the candidate's time should reflect department priorities.

- Ensure that there are different ways in which candidates may interact with staff. Consider providing candidates with opportunities to reveal their strengths through less formal events, such as question and answer sessions in addition to the traditional job presentation.
- Consider including a guided tour of the campus.



- Ensure that the schedule is not too tightly packed and that there is time for lunch and breaks. Candidates may appreciate free blocks of time between events.

Informing Candidates of the Agenda for the Visit

Candidates should know the schedule for their on campus visit and receive clear expectations regarding any presentation or lecture that they are invited to facilitate.

- Provide evaluation/rating worksheets and other feedback forms that are to be submitted to the search committee after the interview. Requiring interviewers to provide feedback on specific criteria will ensure a more fair assessment of candidates.

After the Search

- ✓ Conduct a post search debrief to review how the process went for the search committee and hire, including discussion of any candidates who turned down offers and what might have been done to make their recruitments successful

Checking References and Verifying Employment History and Education

Notify candidates that their references may be contacted. References allow search committee members to gain further understanding of a candidate's professional accomplishments. All search committee chairs (or designated members of the search committee) are expected to exercise due diligence by contacting references for the finalist(s). Specific job related questions should be developed for the telephone conversation. The committee is not obligated to contact all references submitted by the candidate, but should contact a minimum of three. The content of the reference will be treated confidentially.

The Offer

Upon selection of the finalist, the Office of Human Resources (HR) will extend a verbal offer of employment, explaining to the finalist that the offer is contingent upon the results of a background investigation. (If the offer of employment is declined, or if the background investigation reveals any reason that the finalist should not be hired, HR may recommend offering the position to another acceptable finalist.) The finalist must electronically accept or decline the offer letter via Taleo.

Once the verbal offer is accepted, HR will launch the background investigation via an outside vendor and extend the written offer of employment electronically through Taleo. The finalist must electronically accept or decline the offer letter via Taleo.

- When the background investigation is satisfactorily complete and the offer letter has been accepted, HR sends a new hire confirmation email through Taleo which notifies the hiring manager and the individual to whom the verbal offer was extended that they are eligible to start work.



- The Office of HR will enter the new hire in the HCM Cloud.
- The Office of HR sends thank you/not selected notices from Taleo to all intermediate and finalist candidates who were not selected.

On or Before the First Day of Employment

Before a new staff member is able to assume their duties, the following steps/forms must be completed:

1. Affidavit of Pension is completed by the new staff member and returned to the Office of Human Resources.
2. I-9 Form has been fully completed (Section 1 and 2).



Appendix 1: Interview Question Guidelines

TOPIC	LEGAL QUESTIONS	DISCRIMINATORY QUESTIONS
Family Status	Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the job attendance or travel requirements? If this question is asked, it must be asked of all applicants.	Are you married? What is your spouse's name? What is your maiden name? Do you have any children or plans to have them? What are your childcare arrangements?
Pregnancy Status	None	Are you pregnant? When are you due?
Race	None	What is your race?
Religion	None	What is your religion?
	None	What religious holidays do you observe?
Sex/Gender Identity	None	Are you male or female?
Age	None	How old are you?
	None	What is your birthdate?
Sexual Orientation	None	Are you gay?
Citizenship or Nationality	Can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the United States?	Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you born? What is your "native tongue"?
Disability	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation? Show the applicant the position description so he or she can give an informed answer.	Are you disabled? What is the nature or severity of your disability? What is your condition? Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations?
Military	What type of training or education did you receive in the military?	If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?



Appendix 2: Diversity Advertisement Posting Sites

LGBTinHigherEd.com http://lgbtinhighered.com/
Association for Women in Science
National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals Inc.
Academic Diversity Search
Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering and Technology
Affirmative Action Register
Black Perspective
Committee on Institutional Cooperation
Diversity Expo
Diversity Search
DiversityJobs.com
Equal Opportunity Publications, Inc.
GoldSea - Asian American Daily
Hire Diversity
Hispanic Outlook in Higher Ed
Hispanic Today
Historically Black Colleges and Universities
IM Diversity
Journal of Blacks in Higher Education
NAACP Diversity Job Board
National Minority Staff members Identification Program
Nation Job Education Jobs Page
Native American Jobs
The Black Collegian Online
The Black E.O.E. Journal
College Jobs
Women for Hire
Women in Higher Education
Workplace Diversity



Appendix 3: Diversity Language for Job Advertisement/Vacancy Announcement

Below, you will find required language for vacancy announcements.

- Persons with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations in order to perform the essential functions of the position. If the requested accommodation(s) cannot be made because it would cause the employer undue hardship, the applicant may not be eligible for the position.
- To enrich education through diversity, The College of New Jersey is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The College has a strong commitment to achieving diversity among faculty and staff, and strongly encourages women and members of underrepresented groups to apply.
- In accordance with the New Jersey First Act P.L. 2011 c.70, effective September 1, 2011, new public employees in certain positions (faculty exempt) are required to obtain New Jersey residency within one (1) year of employment. Applicants must meet the requirements listed.

In addition, all job advertisements must be inclusive. While crafting your vacancy announcement, remember to use gender-neutral language and avoid exclusionary words.



Appendix 4: Diversity Interview Questions for Staff Positions

The College of New Jersey (division or business) values diversity among its students, staff members, and staff. We believe that issues about teaching and leadership within a diverse learning environment are important, and we'd like to discuss your experience with and views about diversity. We expect staff members to partner with colleagues and the campus community to make a contribution to the overall inclusivity of the campus community.

1. Please describe how you would work to create an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and increasingly diverse?
2. Describe how you function and communicate effectively and respectfully within the context of varying beliefs, behaviors, and backgrounds.
3. How do you define diversity? Please provide examples of how you demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion?
4. How do you encourage people to honor the uniqueness of each individual? How do you challenge stereotypes and promote inclusion?
5. What are some specific things you plan to do within the next two years to further your development in cultural competency?
6. In what ways have you integrated diversity as part of your professional development?



Appendix 5: Applicants with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 require TCNJ to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment, except when such accommodation would cause an undue hardship.

The ADA also establishes rules about “disability related inquiries,” which consist of a question or series of questions that are likely to solicit information about a disability. The ADA limits an employer’s ability to make disability-related inquiries at three stages:

1. The ADA prohibits all disability related inquiries before an offer of employment, even if they are related to the job.
2. After an applicant is given a conditional job offer, but before he/she starts work, an employer may make disability related inquiries and conduct medical examinations, regardless of whether they are related to the job, as long as it does so for all entering employees in the same job category.
3. After employment begins, an employer may make disability-related inquiries and require medical examinations only if they are job-related and consistent with business necessity.

For assistance in arranging a reasonable accommodation for an applicant, or candidate for employment, please contact the Accessibilities Resource Center (ARC) at: arc@tcnj.edu



Appendix 6: Tips for Interviewing Candidates with Disabilities

These guidelines are provided to help committees in the interviewing process and to enhance communication for committees when interacting with employment candidates with disabilities.

When interviewing a candidate with any disability:

- Ensure that interviews, presentations, lodging, and dining arrangements are mobility accessible. Use the term “accessible parking” rather than “handicapped parking.”
- Be mindful that we all communicate in various ways. It is ok to ask applicants their preferred communication style.
- Pay attention to cues from the person you are communicating with.
- Face the person and speak in typical tones.
- Don’t be afraid to say that you don’t understand, ask the person to repeat what they said and repeat it back to make sure you understood.
- Don’t speak for a person or attempt to finish their sentences.
- Sit down when speaking for more than a few minutes with a person who uses a wheelchair, so you are at eye level.

When interacting with an applicant with a disability:

- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen or ask for instructions.
- It is okay to say that a person uses a wheelchair, especially when dealing with questions of parking and making accommodations.
- Be considerate of the extra time that it may take a person with a disability to perform activities of daily life during the campus visit.
- Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking and wait for them to finish.
- Never pretend to understand; instead repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
- Everyone makes mistakes from time to time. If you make a mistake and offend someone, apologize.

When Interviewing an Applicant Who Uses a Wheelchair:

- Do not lean on the wheelchair.
- Do not push the wheelchair unless asked to do so.
- Make sure you get on the same eye level with the applicant if the conversation lasts more than a couple of minutes.
- Keep accessibility in mind.



When interviewing an applicant who has a visual impairment:

- Do not shout.
- Do not touch an applicant's cane. Do not touch a guide dog when it is in harness.
- Identify yourself and others present immediately.
- When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
- Use verbal cues; be descriptive in giving directions. ("The table is about five steps to your left.")
- Verbalize chair location or place the person's hand on the back of the chair, but do not place the person in the chair.
- Keep doors either opened or closed; a half-opened door is a serious hazard.
- Offer assistance in travel; let the applicant grasp your left arm, usually just above the elbow. Do not initiate contact unless requested to do so.

When interviewing an applicant who is deaf or hard of hearing:

- If requested, plan for an interpreter when the applicant's campus visit is confirmed. Keep in mind that the interpreter's job is to translate, not to get involved in the interview in any other way. Therefore, always speak directly to the applicant.
- Do not shout.
- In order to get the attention of a person with a hearing impairment, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand.
- Enunciate clearly. If the applicant is lip reading, keep your mouth clear of obstructions and place yourself where there is ample lighting. Keep in mind that an accomplished lip reader will be able to clearly understand a percentage of what you are saying.
- Keep in mind an applicant may also rely somewhat on facial expressions or other body language to help in understanding.
- If you do not understand what the applicant is telling you, do not pretend you did. Ask the candidate to repeat the sentence(s).
- Consider using written notes if you are having difficulty communicating.